

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method, apparatus and article of manufacture for allocating use of an access device between a host operating system and a guest operating system. In one embodiment, a source of the received request to use the access device is determined as either the host operating system or the guest operating system. A determination of whether the host or guest operating system has a key for the access device is performed. The key enables either the host operating system or the guest operating system to use the access device. A determination of whether the received request is altering request to change a state of the access device or a passive request to read the access device is also performed. The processing of the request from the host and guest operating systems is similar except when the request is an altering request and neither the guest operating system nor the guest operating system has the key. In this case, the request from the host operating system is passed and the request from the guest operating system is rejected.